

This proclamation is not intended to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14 day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventeenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6458 of July 15, 1992

Captive Nations Week, 1992

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

When Americans first observed Captive Nations Week in 1959, repressive communist regimes had overtaken nations from Central and Eastern Europe to mainland China and overshadowed many others with the very real threat of expansionism. Three years earlier, forces of the Soviet Union had brutally suppressed a popular movement for freedom in Hungary; some 16 years before that, the Soviets had invaded Poland and achieved the forcible annexation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. In 1959, the United Nations had only recently ended its efforts to thwart communist expansionism below the 38th parallel in Korea, and a communist-led insurgency had already begun to threaten South Vietnam. At a time when millions of people were enslaved by Soviet domination or subjugated by proxy, at a time when countless others were terrorized by the threat of communist aggression and subversion, Americans paused during Captive Nations Week to reaffirm our commitment to liberty and self-government and to express our solidarity with all those peoples seeking freedom, independence, and security.

Today, 33 years after our first observance of Captive Nations Week, millions of people who suffered under Soviet domination and communist rule are free. The Iron Curtain and its most despised symbol, the Berlin Wall, have fallen—toppled by courageous individuals who would no longer stand the denial of their fundamental human rights. Today we celebrate the existence of a free and unified Germany, as well as the independence of the Baltic States, Central European countries, and 12 new states that replaced the U.S.S.R. In Afghanistan and Angola, where bloody civil war against Soviet-supported, Marxist-Leninist regimes left thousands dead and millions of others homeless, chances of achieving lasting peace have reached their highest level in years.

As we celebrate the hope of peace and freedom in these and other once-captive nations, we also remember the many courageous, freedom-loving men and women who resisted tyranny and oppression—often at great personal cost. These include the thousands of dissenters who risked imprisonment, exile, and death in order to demand rights that we Americans enjoy: freedom of religion, speech, and assembly,

as well as the right to a fair trial and to protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. They include prisoners of the gulag who remained devoted to liberty despite suffering hunger, torture, and long periods of solitary confinement; and they include selfless religious leaders such as Father Jerzy Popieluszko of Poland, Cardinal Josef Mindszenty of Hungary, and Cardinal Josyf Slipyj of Ukraine, who inspired countless others by their unshakeable belief in the God-given rights and dignity of the human person. From broadcasters at the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, who pierced the Iron Curtain with words of hope and truth, to freedom-fighters in Nicaragua and other Latin American countries who led popular resistance to local despots and to political and military interference from Cuba and the Soviet Union—the men and women whom we remember this week never lost their faith in freedom and in the inevitable triumph of liberty and justice.

As we recall all those who labored and sacrificed to hasten the demise of imperial communism and to liberate the world's captive nations, we must also remember those peoples who remain subject to regimes that continue to deny basic human rights in stark violation of both the letter and the spirit of international human rights agreements, as well as fundamental standards of morality. The United States will continue to speak out against egregious human rights violations in Cuba and elsewhere, and we shall continue to warn the world's newly emerging democracies against another kind of subjugation: the tyranny of ethnic hatred and nationalist rivalries. History has shown how these evils can produce their own form of captivity: a vicious cycle of violence, political repression, and economic stagnation and loss. As this observance of Captive Nations Week reminds us, freedom and peace are precious blessings that require the faith, the will, and the wherewithal to preserve and strengthen them.

The Congress, by Joint Resolution approved July 17, 1959 (73 Stat. 212), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week in July of each year as "Captive Nations Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning July 12, 1992, as Captive Nations Week. I call on all Americans to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities in celebration of the growth of liberty and democracy around the world and in recognition of the need for continued vigilance and resolve in the defense of human rights.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventeenth.

GEORGE BUSH